­­­­Ombudspersons

of the Visegrad Countries

Gdańsk, 16-18 September 2018

We, the signatories of this Declaration, in the year of the 70th anniversary of the adoption, by the United Nations General Assembly, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and of the 65th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, wish to emphasize the significant role of international agreements aimed at protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals, as well as the need to increase public awareness about them.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in direct response to massive violations of the inherent and inalienable rights of every human being, that took place during World War II, as well as the subsequent international legal instruments expanding the catalogue of fundamental rights of individuals and incorporating them into national legislation, are reflections of our common human experience. They provide to every Ombudsperson, in his/her daily work, an indication of the direction of actions taken by us to even better fulfil the particularly important and responsible mission that has been assigned to us. Therefore, we call on the state authorities of our four countries to ratify further important international documents addressing the issue of rights and freedoms of individuals. We also wish to recall the need to implement the provisions of the Copenhagen Declaration (adopted at the high-level conference of the Council of Europe, held on 12-13 April 2018) which stresses the importance of developing mechanisms to enforce the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. It should be emphasized that a special role in this field has been entrusted by the Declaration (point 14 thereof) to national human rights institutions.

We also wish to draw particular attention to the freedom of speech and expression as one of the foundations of a democratic society and the prerequisites for the development and self-fulfilment of every individual. Recognizing the importance of the issue, we carefully and attentively analyse all signals relating to the issue of ensuring the observance of the freedoms to express opinions and to acquire and disseminate information.

Human rights education is becoming one of the main aspects of working with the youth. As Ombudspersons we should take action to shape and educate young people so that they become active citizens who are aware of their rights and are true and main guardians of democracy and the rule of law. We firmly believe that through appropriate education it is possible to build their awareness of the significance of inherent human dignity and respect for the principles of freedom, equality and solidarity as key factors for ensuring prosperous future of the societies of the Visegrad Countries.

Done in Gdansk on 18 September 2018